



Alexandria Waterfront Commission

Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

1108 Jefferson Street

Alexandria, Virginia 22314

June 1, 2023

Honorable Mayor and members of City Council

Re: Waterfront Commission Support for Old Town Business Improvement Service District

Honorable Mayor and Members of Council:

The Waterfront Commission endorses enactment of an Old Town Business Improvement Service District (BISD) to provide enhanced services to businesses, residents, and visitors at the waterfront and along the King Street Corridor.

The Waterfront Commission has long encouraged the City Council to find long-term and sustainable ways to fund investment in waterfront infrastructure, maintenance, and management through mechanisms such as a business improvement district. This recommendation has been a feature of our annual budget recommendation for many years now.

In 2015-16, the Waterfront Commission empaneled a subcommittee to study governance models for waterfront services and activities. To achieve the goals of the Waterfront Small Area Plan—to be authentic, connected, inclusive, dynamic, diverse, manageable and sustainable—the Waterfront Commission recommended development of an operating model that provides the leadership and resources needed to operate and maintain waterfront infrastructure and services, and support enhanced programming. After looking at several different governance models, the Waterfront Commission endorsed the concept of a Community or Business Improvement District (BID).

The Waterfront Commission found that a BID offers the following features:

- A dedicated, nimble structure with strategic oversight and ability to synergize all aspects of waterfront commerce and development
- Entrepreneurial orientation that would efficiently use available resources, with greater benefits to stakeholders (residents, businesses, visitors)
- A governance structure that engages people most impacted by waterfront activities
- Focused oversight of programming and marketing to balance higher traffic
- Emphasis on attractive, well maintained waterfront space to create a cohesive and consistent waterfront appearance to a designated standard

The current proposal to create a BISD would similarly support these objectives. The Alexandria community and the Waterfront Small Area Plan have long advocated for a body charged with managing public spaces and programming near the Waterfront.

The Waterfront Commission recommends that City Council take the key step of establishing an Old Town BISD, fulfilling a long-standing recommendation of our commission's efforts to advise implementation of the Waterfront Small Area Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephen Thayer".

Stephen Thayer, Chair
Alexandria Waterfront Commission

cc: Waterfront Commission
James P. Parajon, City Manager
Emily Baker, Deputy City Manager
Julian J. Gonsalves, Assistant City Manager for Public-Private Partnerships
Stephanie Landrum, President & CEO, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership
Jack Browand, Deputy Director (RPCA), Staff Liaison to Waterfront Commission